TOWN
&
OUNTRY
HURCH

In This Issue

eter Manniche, who writes about the l institutions of Denmark, Page 1, is principal of the International Peoples ege, Elsinore, Denmark. Elsinore also Hamlet's castle. The Peoples College is educational institution using the meth- of Danish Folk Schools, with an inter- onal student body. A few students from A. have attended. More would be wel- e in the summer of 1950, and follow- years. Write Dr. Peter Manniche at the ress above.

ohn Reisner of Agricultural Missions, , writes in practical terms of the rches and Point Four, Page 2.

he thorough report of a commission on nomic and social relations at the coln Convocation is printed in full, inning on Page 5. This is printed in in the hope that it will be widely lied and discussed.

Many types of rural recreation suitable rural church groups are described by don Carter on Page 11.

ew "Collects in Spring," by the Rev. ph Grieser, minister of the Methodist rch, Polo, Illinois, appear on Page 11.

ames Wyker of CROP, Mount Vernon, o, describes a "redemptive, creative, istian" church program, Page 13.

listing of some of the schools, institutes, rses, scheduled for 1950 fills Page 16.

No. 61
April, 1950

The Good Life on the Danish Land

PETER MANNICHE

• The Danish state has been committed to practical methods of encouraging ownership by operators of small land holdings for fifty years. In 1899 a government loan fund was set up. Loans were made mainly to young men with farming experience, provided the applicant had one-tenth of the proposed investment. He could then secure a loan for the other nine-tenths from the state. This has been a method frequently used. About 10,000 families have become farm owners in the process.

There was much public criticism of the scheme at the outset. It was freely predicted that farmers would not pay their obligations to the state. The dire forebodings were, however, unfounded. With few exceptions the small holders have kept their agreements and paid their obligations as due. Small holders are honest people.

Small Holdings

"The holdings are too small," is a remark frequently heard concerning Danish farming. This is a generalization that is often justified, considering the needs of families and the limitations on production from a few acres of land. Many Danish farmers own tracts of only three or four acres, but some of these work part time on large farms or estates.

Later the law was amended, so that loans are now made only on tracts of fifteen acres, or more. The minimum farm for a good standard of living should probably be about twenty-five acres. There are now about 240,000 farms in Denmark, and about 35,000 hired farm laborers. One effect of this law was that the price of land gradually rose, as ownership was actively encouraged.

This, in turn, led to public agitation that the state should assume ownership of land and the farmers should become tenants of the state.

Land From Estates

By a law of 1919, the Danish state took further steps to give the rural people access to the land. The government secured land from the old feudal estates. The estates were required to transfer a portion of their lands to the state and were also forced to sell to the state other sections. The owners of the feudal estates protested and appealed to the courts. The courts at first upheld the estate owners, but the Supreme Court of the nation sustained the law, saying, in effect, that an ancient wrong was being remedied.

By this second process some 10,000 additional small farms have been created in thirty years from land secured from the feudal estates, An annual rent is paid by the farmer for this land to which the state holds title. The rental varies according to the quality and value of the land. There are periodic evaluations of the land to determine the rentals. The buildings on the land belong to the farmer and for all practical purposes he can do what he wants. But the farmer cannot sell the land itself. He can sell his right to the use of the land.

Political Aspects

Thus out of 30,000 owners of the smaller of the farms, two-thirds, about 20,000, are farm operators as a consequence of the two laws described. One result is that the owners of small holdings have considerable political influence. Only about 2,000 of Danish farms have as many as 120 acres each. About 130,000 of our farmers have less than 33 acres each. The votes of the small holders loom large in the total electorate. About half of these farmers are Social Democrats. The Social Democratic Party in Denmark is firmly committed to individual ownership of farm land, even though it has members from the trade unions who are in favor of a high degree of public ownership of industry.

As in other countries, many sons of Danish farmers migrate to the towns and secure jobs in trade and industry. Here, too, they continue

to have considerable political influence.

Mixed farming predominates in Denmark. The main purpose of Danish farms is to ship eggs, butter and bacon to England. Intensive production methods are practiced, and studies indicate that the medium-sized holdings yield the most satisfactory financial returns.

Voluntary Cooperatives

For distribution of their own products and for purchasing of their supplies, the Danish farmers rely heavily on voluntary cooperatives that they themselves own and control. There are about 2,000 small Danish communities or neighborhoods. Every one of these has a purchasing cooperative among farmers. (Every one of these also has a country church.) The farm marketing cooperatives handle about twenty-five per cent of the eggs produced and about eighty-five per cent of the butter and bacon. The cooperatives encourage good animal breeding and in turn are expert at finding export markets.

The cooperatives assist the farmers in adopting output to needs, and the complete dependence for financial success on foreign markets cannot be over-emphasized. I believe that intensive cooperative organization has improved ethical standards. It has encouraged people to become interested in the welfare of their neighbors. It has provided a means whereby people may share success and failure intimately with their neighbors.

Grundtvig's Influence

Danish farm life has been affected directly and indirectly by the philosophy of the great teacher, Bishop Grundtvig, who was the founder of the folk high schools. Grundtvig encouraged the study of history for attaining a view of the purpose of life. About one-fourth to one-third of the farm people have attended the folk high schools. They go to the schools when they are from eighteen to twenty-five years of age. Here has been emphasized not vocational skill but rather personal "enlivement."

The pupils live together with teachers who emphasize not books but "the living word." The method is not narrowly individualistic but broadly social. Although cooperation is not taught as a technique in the schools, there is no doubt that the philosophy of life taught there has both directly and indirectly encouraged the participation of the people in the cooperatives. The best evidence is that most of the officers of the cooperatives have been in the folk high schools.

Finally, Grundtvig's philosophy was Christian and his interpretation of history recognized the Christian doctrine of man. Thus through life and teaching, and through the folk high schools, Grundtvig profoundly influenced the direction and outlook of the Danish people as a whole. These influences have upheld and interpreted Christian traditions among the people, enabling them to cultivate the things of the spirit while engaging in numerous projects of mutual aid.

(From notes taken by Benson Y. Landis at a lecture by Dr. Manniche before a class at the International Peoples College, Elsinore, Denmark.)

The Churches and Point IV

• John H. Reisner of Agricultural Missions discussed "The Churches and Point IV" in *Social Action* of the Congregational Christian Churches for October 15, 1949. Point Four has to do with President Truman's declaration for technical assistance to the so-called underdeveloped countries. The program is being considered by Congress. Mr. Reisner was for a time dean of the Agricultural College of Nanking, China. He writes out of long experience in "technical assistance" with Christian motivation. Some of his comments are as follows:

"The President's Inaugural Address, the draft of the bill submitted to Congress for legislative action on the Point IV program, and the President's message accompanying the legislative draft all emphasize strengthening the economic foundations of the underdeveloped countries and raising standards of living in them. Certainly the Christian membership in the Church can unreservedly accept the President's statement in his Inaugural Address that only by helping the least fortunate of its members to help themselves can the human family achieve the decent, satisfying life that is the right of all people. Not all would agree with his following statement that democracy alone can supply the vitalizing force to stir the people of the world into triumphant action, not only against their human oppressors but also against their ancient enemies—hunger, misery, and despair. Democracy is a result not a cause, and the major cause has its roots in Christian teaching and living.

"The church through its missionary outreach has for a long time been engaged in activities that are clearly comprehended in the objectives of the Point IV program. These experiences have provided a unique understanding of the problem of helping people that is of great significance. Certain definite principles have emerged. Any such program must be comprehensive, dealing with a variety of needs. The projects must be correlated into a unified program aimed to redeem the whole man and minister to the entire life of the community. The starting point is the felt needs of the people themselves. Self-help with the friendly advice of specialists is an indispensable factor if improvement is to be a continuing process. The programs should be planned so as to work with the chief social units in the culture of the people to be reached; this will mean most often a program that is family-centered with the needs of the women rated equal to those of the men. Demonstration is more effective than exhortation. Whatever is attempted should be planned and evaluated with the intent of reproduction elsewhere."

Today to Country Pastures

e lowly Galilean preached
ermon on the hill,
other by the seaside,
ling the Father's will;
drew from rural landscapes
e parables we know.
day to country pastures
ist calls, and shepherds go.

e orchards and the meadows
robed in richest green,
ere beauties of creation
y everywhere be seen,
ere man with Master worketh
partners tilling fields;
d's servant called to labor;
ist calls, he gladly yields.

ere peaks of blue-crowned mountains
ach up to touch the sky,
ere crystal streams meander,
d birds in freedom fly;
ere oaks and pines reach heavenward,
d challenge us to grow
ll in wisdom, stature;
rist calls, His servants go.

in the spirit of Jesus;
ese messengers of love.
d glad response, devotion,
God who reigns above;
ere is no higher calling
at any man can know
an that of a country pastor;
rist calls, His servants go.

—*Burton C. Bastuscheck*

Burton Bastuscheck shepherds four Methodist parishes of Mcnnellsburg, Cito, Knobsville and rt Littleton in southern Pennsylnia. The parishes are confined to narrow valley which runs north d south for twenty-five miles.

A recent article in *The Christian rald, New York,* entitled "How een is his Parish," tells us that . Bastuscheck grew up on a farm. e was able to see at first hand w rural churches were neglected. And so when he became a minishimself he set about to do what could to lend some dignity to al church work." His ministry s been a success from the start.

Grass Is Immortal

• Grass is the forgiveness of Nature —her constant benediction. Fields trampled with battle, saturated with blood, torn with the ruts of cannon, grow green again with grass, and carnage is forgotten. Streets abandoned by traffic become grass grown, like rural lanes, and are obliterated, Forests decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish, but grass is immortal.

Beleaguered by sullen hosts of winter, it withdraws into the impregnable fortress of its subterranean vitality, and emerges upon the first solicitation of spring. Sown by the winds, by wandering birds, propagated by the subtle horticulture of the elements, which are its ministers and servants, it softens the rude outline of the world.

Unobtrusive and patient, it has immortal vigor and aggression. Banished from the thoroughfares and the fields, it abides its time to return, and when vigilance is relaxed, or the dynasty has perished, it silently resumes the throne, from which it has been expelled, but which it never abdicates. It bears no blazonry of bloom to charm the senses with fragrance or splendor, but its homely hue is more enchanting than the lily or the rose. It yields no fruit in earth or air, and yet should its harvest fail for a single year, famine would depopulate the earth.

—John J. Ingalls

The Kingdom of God

• John Erskine, in his book, *The Human Life of Jesus,* comments on The Lord's Prayer as follows:

"When we pray for the bread which human labor, collaborating with the soil, the sun and the weather, has brought from the wheat field to the table, we pray also for the perpetual communion, here in this life, of minds, and hearts, and souls, in the grace of fellowship. We are praying, that is, for the coming of the Kingdom of God."

What Kind of a Harvest Will They Reap?

• In the 1930's, John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" made a nation indignantly aware of the poverty and travail of its migrant agricultural workers.

Public opinion and economic changes have brought some progress in developing a program to meet the needs of these workers, but today the federal government program has been withdrawn. Rising unemployment across the nation is expected to send additional thousands into harvest work.

This summer the men, women and children who follow the crops may too easily slide back into the misery of the 1930's. They need our Christian help.

In the last decade some employers have improved housing for the migrant families, but too often even today they must live in shacks, boxcars, or tiny cubicles partitioned out of a warehouse or a stable. In the face of rising living costs, a family of eight or nine may make an average wage of $800 a year. The children, handicapped by the impossibility of regular schooling, receive even less education than their parents. Economic necessity, too, often forces children of seven or eight to work in the fields with the rest of the family. There is little provision for their health, social welfare or religious needs.

The migrants' seasonal labor is essential to the national economy. Yet they have pitifully little share in the "American Way of Life" they help make possible.

Creating a better Christian America for these disinherited human beings is a test and a challenge for all of us as citizens and Christians. Cooperative church action can do a great deal to meet the challenge. Today twenty-three denominations, working through the Home Missions Council, carry out a program of recreation, education, child care, counseling and worship for the migrants in twenty-three states.

By increasing your local church contributions to the national missions board of your denomination; by becoming informed about migrants in your own communities; by working with councils of churches and church women; in all these ways you can help create a better Christian America for these disinherited people.

The Best Ear

• John Thornton, farmer of the First Christian Church, Van Alstyne, Texas (Route 1, Anna, Texas) and Mrs. Thornton, took 10 grains of corn, which they had received in a Thanksgiving service, and planted them in their garden. They wanted to find out just how much God would increase 10 grains.

These 10 grains of corn were planted in black waxy soil, common in Texas. The corn was subject to the hazards of crops, such as the following: Planted in a single row, away from other corn, they did not pollenize well. A mule stepped on one stalk, and broke it down. The corn was near a young pecan tree, which grew more than expected and sapped the strength from the stalks near it. Disease damaged two ears. One ear did not mature at all. Despite these handicaps the corn produced as follows:

The best ear had 882 good grains. The other ears produced 560, 544, 514, 450, 393, 348, 281, and 149 grains—a total of 4,121 grains from 10, or an increase of 412 to 1.

John Thornton thus proved that God does increase many fold, and that while the increase may be "some thirty-fold, some sixty, some an hundred-fold," there may be much more—even more than 400-fold.

Country Doctor Wins Award

• The American Medical Association recently gave its 1949 award for the "outstanding general practitioner" to Dr. Andy Hall of Mount Vernon, Ill. Dr. Hall was eighty-four years of age when he received the medal. He keeps office hours from eight to five daily.

He recalled kitchen-table surgery in the horse and buggy days, denounced socialized medicine, and said forty per cent of his services had never been paid for. He served his country in three wars. Three of his sons became doctors.

Rural Life Sunday, 1950

• Rural Life Sunday will be observed in 1950 on the fifth Sunday after Easter, Rogation Sunday, May 14, or, if this is not a convenient time, on the last Sunday of April, the 30th.

The Committee on Town and Country again has available an order of service suitable for use by a congregation. The order of service for 1950 was prepared by the Rev. Gaius Glenn Atkins.

In addition to the order of service containing responsive readings and suggested hymns, there is a bibliography and a paragraph on "How to Observe Rural Life Sunday" and data on the origin of Rural Life Sunday.

Copies may be obtained from your cooperating home missions board. If copies are not available through your home missions board, the Committee on Town and Country is prepared to fill orders. Single copies 5c each with rates on quantities as follows: 100 copies, $1.00; 250 copies, $2.05; 500 copies, $3.30; 1,000 copies, $6.00; carriage extra on quantity orders.

Agricultural Relations Leaflet

• The fourth of a series of Agricultural Relations Leaflets is entitled "Thy Neighbor as Thyself" (The Cooperative Movement). It is published by the Congregational Christian Council for Social Action, Merom, Ind. Single copies are 3 cents each; 25 cents for 12; $1.50 a hundred.

The leaflet tells what co-ops are, about differences between co-ops and other businesses, why Christians support co-ops, why Christians criticize co-ops.

New Director

• Howard Kester has been elected director of the John C. Campbell Folk School, which was founded twenty-four years ago in the southwestern mountains of North Carolina for the enrichment of rural life and the building of an enlightened citizenship. It is expected that he will assume his responsibilities sometime during the early summer.

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A Protestant Policy on Rural Economic and Social Relations

(Note: This paper was prepared by a sub-committee of the Committee on Town and Country. It was then considered at a conference that included the Employed Rural Officers, social scientists and other interested persons. Finally it was revised and approved by a Commission on Rural Economic and Social Relations of the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at Lincoln, Nebraska, in November, 1949. It is now presented by the Committee on Town and Country for study in the churches.)

Introduction

One of the functions of Protestant rural churches is to make the teachings, ethics, and spirit of Jesus Christ effective in the total life of rural people—their family relationships, homes, schools, religious institutions, government, health, recreation, and economic and social organization. To accomplish this purpose it is important that rural churches understand the changes wihch are taking place in the American countryside, and the nature of the new rural society which is emerging.

Rural life today is more dynamic than ever before. Numerous organizations have been formed and new patterns of association have arisen which change the habits and outlook of rural people. Machinery is doing in a few hours what formerly required many days. New methods of plant and animal breeding and scientific methods of cultivation have increased production many times. These developments in technology have made it possible for an ever increasing quantity of agricultural goods to be produced with an ever decreasing number of workers. This has lessened the dependence of rural people on agriculture as a means of livelihood. About half the people who are classified as rural are engaged in non-farm occupations.

In the light of these changing conditions, rural churches have a responsibility to re-define their policies as they affect the lives of about 57,000,000 rural people, and to make sure that the new patterns of action, relationship, and thought being developed in our changing rural society are influenced by Christian ideals and values.

The quality of American rural society exerts an influence beyond the strictly rural communities of our nation. It is not possible to define the differences between rural and urban precisely. For practical purposes of enumeration, the United States Census lists rural people as those living in places with a population of less than 2,500, and in unincorporated political subdivisions with a population of less than 10,000, and a population density of less than 1,000 per square mile. But many people in places much larger than 2,500 are conditioned by rural influences. It is in recognition of this fact that many rural agencies operate in cities up to 5,000 or even 10,000. Moreover, rural America not only reproduces itself biologically, but, because of its higher birthrate, supplies population for urban America. Although the population in the United States is more urban than rural, in the world as a whole a majority of the people are rural. What happens to rural life throughout the world is affected in no small measure by what happens in rural America.

It is important that the churches develop a policy for rural life which embraces the economic, social, cultural, educational, and other facets of life, which are all interrelated. There are excellent examples of churches which have well-planned programs endeavoring to deal with all of man's interests, but by and large, the outlook of rural churches has been restricted. In the era ahead there is an opportunity for the kind of faith that influences all these interests—individual and social. In order to lead the way toward such a faith, the following statement has been prepared on the economic and social tasks and relations of the church in town and country.

Photograph by Winston Pote
A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.

The Family

The family is the basic unit of rural society. It should be given prior consideration by the church to the end that its integrity be conserved at all points and its role strengthened. The church has always proclaimed the sanctity of the family. Its significance as an institution which can provide for the Christian development of its members is unsurpassed. The small community with economically sound family farms is a most favorable environment for the family to fulfill its function of providing many opportunities for participation in an intimate, cooperative, economic process.

The family needs to be given an opportunity to participate in a program of religious education which will strengthen its unity. It becomes a constructive social unit only when it has been exposed to moral and ethical teaching of a kind that it can understand in terms of its day-by-day living. The church needs also to provide the kind of leadership and activities which will tend to integrate family life. This may be done by introducing into the home activities and interests in which the whole family will engage; also there may be church activities which provide maximum opportunities for family participation.

Rural ministers should become more expert in family counseling, and they should know social services available in their areas so that they can promptly refer to the proper agency cases which need specialized help.

A rural church fulfills a major obligation when it helps all of the families in its constituency to develop Christian family life. This embraces worship, love, individual responsibility and mutual helpfulness. If it is the only church in a community, then its responsibility extends to all the families within the community bounds. If it is one of several churches in a community, it should seek the cooperation of the other churches in its efforts to bring Christian services into the home of every family in the area.

The Community

The modern rural community is increasing in area and in number of people, service agencies and institutions, with complex relationships. Nevertheless, the rural community is still the setting in which people find much of their primary sense of citizenship and responsibility for activities of life beyond the family and neighborhood. The intimate rel tionship of people within their soci groupings and institutions magnifi the importance of the rural co munity.

One of the advantages of the rur church is that it is in a position reach all the people of the co munity, either alone or in cooper tion with other local churches, a to know its people in every ci cumstance of their lives. A rur church has a responsibility to he its people to apply the teachings Christ in all relationships.

Furthermore, in the smaller town villages, and open country the pro esses of democracy can best worked out and patterns of dem cratic action can be more easi tested and perfected, since demo racy has its roots in small grou where associations are face to fa and where a sense of personal r sponsibility is developed.

Rural churches should lead the people to study their community, find out what needs of communi life are not being met, or are bei met inadequately, and to plan a work cooperatively to meet su needs. Rural churches can help the people visualize what their co munity should be, and then wo with them to make that vision reality. Health, housing, recreatio art, music, drama, schools, librari radio programs, newspapers, and a tivities and organizations of all kin are concerns of the rural church, a may be included in church-inspir community study and planning.

The church should avoid dup cating the effective work of oth community agencies but should e courage the integration of the forts of all. One way of doing this through the medium of a communi council. It is the function of t church to furnish the vision, t scale of values, and the leadershi and to make sure that no class group is neglected, but that the co munity planning is directed towa the needs of all people regardless age, sex, race, creed, color, or cupation.

The Rural Non-Farm Population

Traditionally, rural people we farmers. Today more than half t

nerican rural population are non-
m people. Between 1940 and 1947
e rural non-farm population grew
re rapidly than any other section
the population. Thus the rural
mmunity is not primarily agri-
ltural, as it once was. Increasingly
e rural community is being chosen
a place of residence by people
o work elsewhere. There are now
ny part-time farmers. The prob-
ns inherent in the rapid increase
these rural non-farm people which
ncern rural churches are:

1. The tendency of many rural communities and neighborhoods to be unwilling to absorb newcomers, particularly when those newcomers are urban wage-earners.
2. The fact that many newcomers, for a time at least, do not seem interested in their adopted community.
3. The inadequacy of many rural institutions to serve an expanding population.
4. The tendency of some city institutions to hold their members who move to outlying areas instead of encouraging them to become related to rural organizations.
5. The lack of local planning and action to provide for this increasing non-farm rural population.

Many instances arise of conflicting
terests, attitudes, customs and
bits between rural farm and rural
n-farm people in the same com-
unity. The automobile, the con-
lidated school and other factors
ve brought them closer together,
t they frequently find themselves
opposite sides of the bargaining
unter in economic matters and in
ffering schools of thought in social
d religious concerns. Thus prox-
ity may breed competition and
nflict. The church has an especial
sponsibility to work for the unity
the larger community, for the
tegration of rural farm and rural
n-farm people.

In many instances rural churches
e adapting their programs to the
eds and demands of this rapidly
creasing non-farm population. En-
hed programs which attract the support of the whole community are part of this adaptation. Wherever a strong program has been developed, many of the problems related to the non-farm groups in the rural population are disappearing.

Rural-Urban Relationships

Rural people are no longer shut off from the world. Better means of transportation and communication have caused this change. Neighborhoods are changing, disappearing, and in many cases fitting into the new larger community. Agricultural, civic, educational, fraternal, religious, and other institutions and organizations are helping to mold a new rural way of living. The nation's rural future is unpredictable. But if present trends continue, city ways of living may be expected to dominate, because present factors are tending to urbanize rural people. It is possible, however, that the future trend may be toward a balance between rural and urban social and economic relations. It is possible that the rural life of tomorrow, by combining the better elements of rural society with selected phases of the city, may achieve a level of human adjustment that has been unparalleled in the past.

As an aid to such a sound adjustment of rural and urban interests, it is essential that rural people generally achieve a far better understanding of industry, commerce and organized labor in the cities. The country church has a ministry of information and reconciliation to perform in this extremely important area of human relations.

Social Welfare

It is important that rural churches stimulate their members to see the need of just and adequate social welfare legislation, and that the benefits of such laws are made applicable to all members of society. Rural communities deserve adequate social agencies and services for those persons who are dependent or handicapped.

The benefits of social security should be extended to include farmers, farm laborers, tenants, and others who are not now reached by those forms of security.

Rural churches should serve as a motivating agency within the community in working to obtain the following health standards:

1. Adequate numbers of doctors, nurses and dentists.
2. Hospitals and health clinics fairly distributed.
3. Education for and the establishment of preventive medicine and the expansion of public health work.
4. Adequate medical care made available to all groups regardless of individual incomes.
5. Education for and establishment of better sanitary facilities.
6. Education for proper nutritional diet for rural people.
7. Mental hygiene education and clinical care.

About two-thirds of the nation's farm families are ill-housed, and a large portion of these inadequate houses are beyond repair. Most of them are in sections where there is a large proportion of tenants and agricultural laborers. Every program directed towards the improvement of rural housing will advance the health and dignity of rural people.

Churches should educate their people to work towards the adoption of a standard for rural housing which would provide rural homes that are substantial in construction, attractive in appearance, suited to the climate, large enough to meet the needs of the family, and equipped with electricity, heat, water, sewage disposal, and provision for the care of food.

Rural churches should cooperate in efforts toward legislation requiring farm owners to provide minimum adequate housing for farm and national legislation.

The great majority of rural people do not have adequate opportunity for wholesome recreation or do not know how to take advantage of the resources they do have. Rural churches should provide leadership in making the community socially satisfying to both youth and adults. This is all the more important because of the trend toward more leisure time made possible by mechanization and other forces.

The churches should recognize and encourage two essential approaches to the field of rural social welfare: vigorous local participation and cooperation, and sound state and national legislation.

Rural Education

Next to the family, the school is the most significant social institution with which the churches work. The public school is a determinative agent in character-building and preparation for citizenship. The rural school is particularly effective when it utilizes the educational values inherent in the small community and the resources for learning which accrue from face-to-face relationships of rural living. Unfortunately, rural schools are often drab, lacking in proper organization, adequate equipment, well-rounded curriculum, and inspired leadership for the best expression of creative teaching. Yet the rural school has a tremendous responsibility. It is responsible for the education of about half the nation's youth with considerably less than half of the economic and educational resources of the nation. It is required not only to train for living those who remain in rural areas, but to prepare for urban living the large number who will migrate to the city.

The rural school must provide continuing educational opportunities for adults as well as young people and children. This requires a community-minded school and the use of equipment and buildings for more than academic purposes. Adults learn from social participation which calls for a broad concept of education and the entrance of the school into the varied activities of the people.

The rural schools need better equipment, more money for teachers' salaries, modern organization of districts, improved roads for bus transportation, community-supported hot lunch programs, and citizen-initiated public backing, including equalization of school funds.

Churches have the opportunity and duty to encourage the highest quality of curriculum and extra-curricular activities, including character and religious education. Rural churches should take the initiative in promoting cooperation of the school in community affairs and in making it the agent of education for the skills of rural living, a knowledge of rural folklore, a sense of community responsibility and a broad world outlook.

The equalization of educational opportunities is being promoted in many states by grants in aid to those school districts that have the least adequate economic resources. By the same methods federal aid for schools would improve rural education.

As for the relation of religion and public education, acceptance is here given to a portion of a report on this subject adopted by the International Council of Religious Education: "Religion and education are inseparably related. . . . As Protestants we declare our interest in and support of the public school. . . . We do not believe that parochial schools are the Protestant answer. . . . Public education can and should give more explicit recognition to the fact that its own spiritual values and democratic objectives rest upon the foundation of the Judae-Christian religious tradition . . . and it should seek at all times to re-enforce and build upon this foundation in the life of the school."

Communications and Utilities

The complete services of the modern rural community will be denied a considerable number of rural families so long as means of transportation and communication remain inadequate. Poor roads and inadequate telephone services limit participation in the social life of the community and may actually prevent the development of the community; they interfere with the profitable marketing of products; they limit the services of the doctor, the minister, the social worker, and other public servants; and they result in a partial isolation of many rural people from the on-going life of the society.

With electricity and its facilities playing such an important part in the rural communities, they are no longer to be looked upon as luxuries, but as among the essentials of life. The work of such organizations as R.E.A. and other government-backed projects for increased communication and utility facilities is to be commended. The church should support such programs in whatever manner is deemed best.

Rural churches have a stake in a demand for good utilities and communication facilities for rural people and should champion the use of state and federal funds for the building and maintaining of adequate and extended facilities.

Conservation of Natural Resources

The church has a lasting concern for developing creative human lives and it cannot hope to establish such lives on land without conserving, maintaining and improving its productive capacity. Rural churches have a responsibility to teach that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," and that men are stewards accountable to God. Rural churches should encourage their people to cooperate with all conservation agencies which teach and promote the scientific use of natural resources, such as the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, Bureau of Reclamation, federal and state forestry services, colleges of agriculture and forestry, extension services, and farm organizations. Every rural clergyman should know the local persons employed by these agencies.

It is particularly important in these days of materialism that rural churches give their people a scale of values based on respect for the needs of their fellowmen and of those who come after them. Unless churches develop these values, rural people will lose their Christian perspective and rely on immediate economic gain as their standard of measure.

It is the function of rural churches to encourage the conservation of local resources. This can be done by forming church-sponsored groups to study local economic resources so that they can be made to yield a maximum return compatible with good conservation methods.

Agricultural Production and Marketing

Agricultural production can be considered satisfactory only when it supplies the products of farm and

st in sufficient quantity to meet needs of the world without ating good conservation practices without exploiting those who duce such goods. The well-being the community and its institu-is depends upon an adequate duction and marketing program, in many cases the proper ıncing of agricultural and non-cultural occupations. Rural rches can perform a much needed ice by helping their people consider in the light of the istian faith and ethic such prob-s as: What agricultural policies necessary to assure the produc-ı of essential goods and at the ıe time give the farmer a fair re-n? How can the farmer's fair re in the national income be ured? How can the costs of distri-ion of agricultural products be t at a minimum? What kind of ernational trade agreements are st likely to affect the equitable ribution and consumption of icultural goods? How may farm-populations with poor oppor-ities for employment in agricul-e be adjusted to new occupations? Cooperatives among farmers der many useful services in the rketing process. They have en-ed individual producers to as-iate themselves so as to attain re orderly and efficient marketing ın was possible when each small oducer made his own contacts with markets. Closely related in func-n and importance are the numer-s production credit associations l farm loan associations. Coopera-e purchasing of farm and home oplies is widely carried on with ıdable benefits. Cooperative or-ıizations for economic better-nt afford opportunities for demo-tic participation.

nd Tenure

Traditionally rural churches have ored an agricultural economy sed on the widest possible meas-e of full, free and responsible nership of the land by those who e on it and farm it. Ownership of oductive land by the man who rks it contributes to the growth personality, the development of nily life, and leads to a stable, secure farm population, which is able to maintain progressive social institutions. The country church should understand and promote programs of education, counseling service, and public policy formulation which will strengthen and perpetuate the role of the owner-operated family farm in America. Rural churches should encourage the family-farm type of land tenure in the following ways: They should encourage land settlement and farm and home ownership programs in cooperation with appropriate government agencies, or under the auspices of national or regional church boards and local parishes, and through local cooperatives which have loan funds for the purchase of land, livestock, and equipment.

Rural churches should explore ways and means by which tenant farmers can advance to land ownership, such as access to reasonable credit facilities, and help their tenant farmers make use of such means. They should aid in a study of local conditions to determine what size farm is most likely to combine efficient production with family operation. No single acreage standard can be devised for the whole country because of the wide variation of crop demands and soil productivity.

Rural churches should discourage large commercial holdings of productive agricultural land and absentee ownership. In this connection it is important for rural church groups to recognize the fact that mechanization of agriculture tends to increase the acreage and investment in the typical family farm. Rural churches interested in combining the economic advantages of efficient production with the social values of family owned and operated farms should investigate the possibilities of cooperative ownership of farm machinery and other forms of agricultural cooperation. Rural churches should promote the use of lease and labor contracts which give farm tenants some security of tenure and compensation for improvements, and which make possible individual ownership of a home and of enough land for family use. The latter is especially needed in cases of employment in large scale agricultural production.

Part-time farming may also be encouraged as a device for preserving the values of country living without requiring financial investment demanded by modern, full-time farming. This, of course, would depend on there being opportunities for cash employment available.

Agricultural Labor

Although we favor the family farm, we recognize that for a long time to come we may anticipate a considerable body of landless agricultural labor. One of the concerns of rural churches is to see that agricultural labor is provided with living and working conditions conducive to health, productivity, and happiness. A social order cannot be condoned which permits thousands of migrant workers to be indecently housed, untaught, unhealthy, and economically insecure.

Through discussion groups and community studies rural churches can become informed about labor conditions within their parishes. They can take a stand in favor of fair labor standards and wages and against the exploitation of men, women and children for private financial gain. They should know whether or not there is a valid labor shortage within their own community when workers from other areas and countries are brought in, and protest when excessive numbers are imported. When imported labor is necessary, they can inform themselves about the terms of the contract under which such workers are hired and help to make it possible for such workers to have community services, including a church home.

The churches have long declared that both employers and employees have the right to organize; that it is socially desirable that both become organized; that both employers and employees have an obligation to advance the public interest through their organization. Farmers and farm labor have the same right to organize and the same duty to use their organization responsibly.

Rural churches have an obliga-

tion to teach their people that no one economic group can permanently assure itself of a high level of living at the expense of other groups. Rural churches have an unparalleled opportunity to give their people a Christian scale of values by which to measure labor problems and disputes so that they will work for justice and economic welfare rather than for partisan interests.

Decentralization

Decentralization is one of the effective safeguards of human liberty. A decentralized society, run by socially responsible individuals, will enable local people to own and control productive property—including farms, factories, mines, and processing plants—to exercise local initiative in their affairs, and to have responsibility for economic policies and programs. The productive homestead can become the cornerstone of decentralized society. This applies to the non-farm homestead as well as to the farm. Decentralized industries may contribute to community stability by affording job opportunities and utilizing local resources.

Cooperatives may be examples of economic decentralization. In the field of finance, many credit unions, which are cooperative people's banks, are demonstrating that ordinary people can become their own bankers, at least to the extent of supplying their own short-term credit needs. The importance of marketing, credit and purchasing associations has been noted previously.

Rural electrification is one of the important means of decentralization. It presents the rural community with new opportunities for the handling and processing of products. The wide expansion of rural electrification is therefore to be encouraged, particularly where it is cooperatively organized.

Full recognition of the right of individuals to start private businesses of their own is a requisite of economic democracy. The rural community offers many opportunities for the initiation of private businesses, service agencies and professional services. The church can perform an important role in pointing out the opportunities, upholding the motive of service, the dignity of labor and pride in workmanship.

However, it cannot be denied that even in rural life it is difficult for individuals to develop successful small scale private enterprises. Modern agricultural and industrial ventures require technical knowledge, managerial ability, and a cash outlay or credit beyond the average man's capacity. Cooperatives organized on the Rochdale principles can afford men of small means an opportunity to achieve, through joint planning and endeavor, economic security which would be difficult for them to obtain independently. The Rochdale principles are regarded by many as providing a direct application of Christian teachings to economic and social organization, in that they incorporate open membership regardless of race, color, economic or social status, and provide democratic control by means of one vote for each member.

We believe that the things that matter most are on the side of decentralization—the true interests and needs of the individual, the family, the community, the region, and most important, the human spirit.

Development of River Valleys

Rural churches should recognize that there are areas in which federal government action is the most effective instrument of resource planning. Projects like those in the Tennessee Valley, the Missouri Valley, and the Columbia River Valley developments, which cover a number of states, fall naturally within the scope of the federal government. Private enterprise alone cannot do the long-time planning and development required by such projects. Such federal projects should be developed on an integrated river basin basis and should provide a comprehensive program of forestation, soil conservation, irrigation, flood control, power operation, navigation, municipal water supply, wild life conservation, and recreation.

By effecting the unified development of the resources of these river valleys, these projects promote a higher level of living by making possible the improvement of agriculture and homemaking and the establishment of local industries. Good farming practices, such as erosion control and reforestation, improve and protect natural resources. More people are provided with a means of livelihood because the improvements introduced by such projects permit greater density of population.

Rural churches have a concern, therefore, in these government projects not only at the point of conservation and maximum utilization of natural resources, but also at the point of better living conditions for more people and provision of social and economic programs. The minister also has a responsibility to be a conciliator when there are clashing interests.

. . . .

If the thousands of ministers serving rural churches throughout our land will take intelligent advantage of their many opportunities to promote better community living they can strengthen rural society in this country. This not only would benefit our people but would have a stabilizing influence throughout the world. We as Protestants have the greatest opportunity in our history to work in the rural areas of America with a comprehensive powerful church program, expressing the full implications of the Christian way of life. We have people, we have churches, we have organization, we have programs and methods which, if used effectively could be the main factor in Christianizing our changing rural society.

In the United Church of Canada

• In the United Church of Canada approximately 1700 out of 3215 ministers serve in rural areas. These ministers have an average of at least four churches to serve. The United Church of Canada serves more than one-half of all Protestant rural people. At least seventy per cent of all United Churches are in rural areas. The United Church of Canada has 380,000 rural members as compared with 265,000 in all other Protestant communions.

Rural Recreation

GORDON CARTER

When the Christian church faces e problems related to juvenile otection it is most important that e home first be taken into con-leration. Wholesome recreation the rural homes of America will an important step in putting uscle and sinew on the family eleton, and provide wholesome s that will bind youth to the me. "The family that plays to-ther, stays together."

Each local church ought to have a rent group within the framework the church or Sunday school. This oup would be interested in discus-on and action in the area of "rec-ation and the home." Let us iefly state a few ideas for home creation:

Hobbies: Carving, block printing, oodwork, music, painting, puppets, ndicrafts, gardening, raising of imals, nature collections, creative riting, etc.

Workshop: Find a place that the mily as a group can use as a work-op (shed, attic, basement or rage).

Family Fellowship and Fun: Sun-y family fellowship, games around e table at mealtime, songfests, chestra, story telling, reading, mily excursions, outdoor sports, c.

Open House for the young people the family that they may share in e entertainment and the refresh-ents.

Every family would do well to ve a family council periodically at all might help plan recreation, ork, worship, education, etc.

If the church is to be a vital in-rument in preventing juvenile de-nquency, it must become the com-unity recreation center.

A church committee on recreation ould schedule a year's activities for l ages and groups, this to be posted d adhered to by the organizations the church. The church or some her building ought to be available ce a week for games, parties, sing-g, handicrafts, etc. These youth nters do not operate themselves, t must be planned and executed joint committees of youth and adults. If possible, each community ought to have a workshop available either in the school or church that youth could frequent in leisure time.

The secret of recreational planning is to have a varied program of activities. We will list some items that should be included in a well-rounded recreational program:

1. *Singing:* American folk songs, spirituals, folk songs of other lands, singing games, novelty songs, fun songs.

2. *Parties:* Themes ought to be original and appealing—seasons, special days, holidays, events of national importance.

3. *Games:* Get-acquainted games, active games, quiet games, stunts, folk games, square dances, children's games, in and outdoor games.

4. *Crafts:* General crafts with cork felt, metal, wood, etc.; shell-craft, leather craft, paper sculpturing, finger painting, textile stenciling, photography, archery, silver-craft, chip carving.

This is but a sketch of what can be done in rural recreation by the church as an instrument of juvenile protection. Read the words of Seneca, "He who does not prevent a crime when he can, encourages it."

—Reprinted from *The Baptist New Yorker*

Problems of the Rural Church School

• The difficulties which face the organization of small Sunday schools and their possible solutions were presented by Richard O. Comfort in a recent issue of the *International Journal* of *Religious Education,* Chicago, Ill. Some of these difficulties are a small budget, lack of trained leadership, poor equipment, small numbers and conservatism. These five do constitute real problems for the organizational aspects of the rural church, but they are "being solved," the writer says, by "consecrated ministers and laymen who realize the importance of the program of Christian education in the rural church, not only to the rural people themselves, but through them to America and the world which the present generation of rural people will soon lead."

Collects in Spring

• O Thou great Spirit of Creation, help us to find in the quickened feet and wings of wildlife in the springtime the stirrings of strength to send us forth to neighborly deeds for the fulfillment of Thy purposes on earth; through Christ the Lord. Amen.

O God, whose command the seasons obey, and whose force arouses plant-life to flower and produce, awaken us to renewed testimony born of Christian faith; that where lives have been dormant they, too, may experience new birth in devotion to Thy Kingdom; through Jesus Christ who came to give us life. Amen.

Great Father, who saw that the created world was good, as we furrow the warmed earth and with tender hands cover the tiny seeds looking toward the harvest of garden and field, show us Thy plan for the sustenance of souls through man's stewardship of the soil; to the praise of Thy care for Thy children; through Him in whom we may abide forever. Amen.

—RALPH GRIESER

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Urban Convocation

• A "master-plan" designed to eliminate cut-throat competition among city churches and to gear their work into every phase of city life was blueprinted by the National Convocation on the City Church in Columbus, Ohio, January 24, 1950.

More than 400 delegates from 32 denominations expressed their determination to revitalize Protestant city life by establishing a permanent national agency to deal with Protestant city church planning.

The new body, to be known as the Joint Commission on the Urban Church, will be sponsored jointly by the Home Missions Council of North America, the Federal Council of Churches, and the International Council of Religious Education.

Dr. Ross Sanderson of New York, who will serve as executive secretary of the new agency, said the action by the Convocation in setting up the new church body "places the interests of city church groups on the same level with that enjoyed by rural church interests for the past generation."

Housing in the over-crowded cities, as a part of Protestant concern for human welfare and wholesome family life was an important part of the Convocation program. "If present adequate housing cannot be provided for by private resources, it becomes the responsibility of federal, state and local governments to make proper provision," the delegates stated in one resolution. They also resolved that housing projects, whether publicly or privately financed, should be non-segregated.

In his keynote address to the delegates, the Very Rev. Sidney E. Sweet, Dean of Christ Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo., declared: "All prejudices against any race are unChristian. Insofar as we, in our churches, permit these prejudices to dictate our church policies our church fails Him who said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' "

A third major problem acted upon by the delegates was that of ministry to the long-neglected city slums.

"Enlistment and training of a ministry and teaching staff which is ready and able to sympathize with and minister to the special needs of families, chlidren and youth in blighted or transitional central city areas," was called for in one resolution.

The emphasis on interdenominational cooperation was also strong in resolutions on churching the large-scale housing projects.

Lord's Acre Auction

• A successful Lord's Acre project was effected last summer and fall by the members of the Pittstown, N. Y., Methodist Church when money was earned to meet the church's indebtedness and to remodel the church hall.

During July and August a roadside stand offered fruit, vegetables and home-baked foods for sale. On September 23rd, a two-day Lord's Acre festival began: a baked ham supper was served at 6:00 P.M.; at 8:00 P.M. a musical show and a hall of laughter offered entertainment and fun for the people. Outside, a number of booths lined each side of the road. There were stands for white elephant articles, books, arts and crafts, vegetables, fancy articles, home-baked foods, and others. Refreshment stands, games, and pony rides for the children furnished lots of fun for everyone.

On Saturday, a dedication service was held at the church at 9:00 A.M. At 10:00 A.M. the booths were open for business and a fellowship period followed. At noon a cafeteria luncheon was served. At 1:30, the public auction began. Articles from all the booths were sold: old and new articles of furniture, a truck, livestock (three calves, a pig, several chickens, two ducks), six acres of buckwheat, a ton of hay, and several dozens of eggs.

The auction netted $336. Sales at the various booths and supper sales netted $482. The treasurer reported a balance of $718, after all bills were paid.

It was a great adventure in Christian stewardship, and our people have voted to launch another Lord's Acre project in 1950.

—Anton Beza

Clergyman Honored

• W. Harold Weigle, a Massachusetts dairy farmer and rector of the Episcopal Church of Our Savior at Lebanon Springs, N. Y., was recently awarded a certificate of merit by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture who praised Dr. Weigle as a "farmer who made the best use of knowledge and services available in his conservation district in 1949 and improved the efficiency and possibility for profitable operation of his farm."

Dr. Weigle was for twenty years rector of the historical St. Paul's Church, Mount Vernon, N. Y. He also served on the faculty of the University of Nanking and as an Episcopalian missionary and agricultural expert in China.

Aaronsburg

• At Aaronsburg, Pa., they have had a sesquicentennial celebration. It was for Salem Church, Lutheran. One hundred and fifty years ago, Aaron Levy, a Jewish immigrant from Amsterdam, contributed the land for Salem Church. "Mr. Levy had a dream of men of all faiths and races dwelling in friendship in this new country."

When they celebrated the gift of a Jewish immigrant to a Lutheran church, the governor came and a justice of the Supreme Court of the U.S., and the delegate from Pakistan to the United Nations.

It was a great day for Aaronsburg, population 400.

"Stewards of the Soil"

• A pamphlet under the above title by Eugene Smathers, minister of the Presbyterian Church at Big Lick, Tenn., is available on application to Friends of the Soil, Lake Geneva, Wis.

The meaning of stewardship is first developed. Then Mr. Smathers discusses Walter Lowdermilk's "Eleventh Commandment."

Mr. Smathers thinks the church "must influence government policies." "The church must help people settle on farms."

"Redemptive, Creative, Christian"

JAMES D. WYKER

The church must deliberately plan
nake all the agencies of the com-
nity redemptive, creative, Chris-
; and it should design its pro-
m so that it provides for agency
emption along with redemption
people.

The total church has another
igation to the community which
must take upon itself—that of
dership training. It takes a
eration for a community to train
ugh leaders to go all the way
und, and by that time the com-
nity needs another corps of lead-
so leadership training is a never-
ling process. Most communities
not need associate pastors; they
d to qualify the lay leaders of
church to assume vastly more
ponsibility for the total Christian
erprise.

The total church should institute
ghborhood groups. A community
divided into enough neighbor-
ods so that not more than twelve
nilies will attend a group. Neigh-
hood groups are self-operative, de-
ing how often they will meet and
whose home they will gather, and
at their processes will be. . . . Such
ups are superior agents for en-
ing new converts or for reclaim-
old converts in the kingdom en-
prise.

ited Front

The total church should institute
hird type of group which engages
study, leading to community ac-
n. Such study-action can turn de-
ted people from despair to hope
en they really understand that
y are collectively masters of their
n destiny. People who have lapsed
o apathy feel the challenge of
tory once more when they join
nds with other defeated people
analyze the forces that have beaten
m down and to harness them-
ves to some master goal of mutual
. The answer to many forces that
n homes and persons is to be
nd in the gospel of mutual aid.

The small community is the laboratory for the ecumenical ideal because it can successfully experiment with operating a community council, training a corps of leaders for itself and other agencies, and employing the cell method of church work. Let us enumerate the obvious reasons why a total and united church is imperative in any small community where Christians want to take their pattern from and build their program on the needs of the community and its people:

1. Independent or competitive church (denominational) programs produce confusion in the spirits of the rank and file of people, but union presents a single appeal and a united front upon which a convert can take action.

2. The church job in the small community needs all the people in order to have enough souls to organize into efficient age groups and working groups.

3. A program such as is contemplated will command all the leaders in the community. Competitive churches use leaders in competitive jobs, but cooperative churches use leaders in diversified jobs.

4. The small community does not have enough revenue to support more than one adequate church program. Competitive churches should pool their money and hire one preacher, even before they unite their programs and congregations.

Religious News Service Photo

Book Reviews

Mission to America. By Truman B. Douglass. Friendship Press, 156 Fifth Ave., New York 10, N.Y. 1951. Cloth, $2.00; Paper, $1.25.

Based on the home mission theme for 1951-1952, "Churches for Our Country's Needs," this book is the general interdenominational guide book for this year's home missions study groups.

"The primary mission of the Christian fellowship," states Dr. Douglass, is "to bring the church into being where it does not now exist, to empower it where it is weak, to recreate it where it has fallen into desuetude and sterility, and to unite its diverse families in one witness to its one Lord."

In this book the author cites the different "aspects of American life that are in contradiction with Christianity and that make the nation a mission field," and he offers a dynamic program for meeting the challenge.

This program requires, first of all, "a new consecration of the whole company of professing Christians to their common mission" of advancing the kingdom of God into every part of America. Then comes "Church Extension," with its many ramifications, "Penetration through Christian Institutions," and "contemporary media for the dissemination of information and ideas." There must be a much wider "sharing of responsibility," Dr. Douglass iterates, if the whole church is to fulfill its mission.

Now!

Now! Everybody Needs a Church is a magazine which should be read with *Mission to America.* It, also, is based on the 1951-1952 home mission theme, "Churches for Our Country's Needs," and is published by Friendship Press, 156 Fifth Ave., New York 10, N.Y.

Now! offers stories of missionary adventure on the home front; it tells what some churches are doing to meet the needs of their members and their communities; it presents biographical sketches and human interest stories.

It also offers six pages of suggestions for leaders of adult and youth groups who are using *Mission to America* and *Now! Everybody Needs a Church* as text books in their home mission study.

Now! is priced at thirty-five cents, and may be procured from Friendship Press.

—R. B. R.

The Land is Mine. By Paul V. Maris. (U.S. Gov't Printing Office). 1950. $1.75.

One of the staunchest friends of the family farm in the United States for many years has been Paul V. Maris. As Director of the Farm Ownership Division of the Farmers Home Administration since its creation in 1937, Mr. Maris has been in a unique position to study the problems of the family farm and to do something creative about them.

Now upon his retirement from government service, Mr. Maris gives us in *The Land is Mine* a remarkably objective appraisal of the Farm Ownership program of F.H.A. The book combines the careful documentation of the research scholar with the warm vitality of what is essentially an autobiography, for in a real sense Paul Maris has been the Farm Ownership program. He has lived it and served it with a passionate personal conviction far beyond the normal call of duty.

The Land is Mine discusses every phase of the Farm Ownership program. The F.O. program is, in a word, a program of supervised credit to potential family farmers who are unable to secure credit from any other legitimate source. Loans may be made for 100% of the value of an economically adequate small family unit or insured for 90% of the value when the loan is advanced by a private source. The borrower is allowed up to forty years for repayment on a modified variable payment plan.

Despite its wealth of detail, the book is rarely tedious. Even the casual reader will hardly dare skip many pages lest he miss the frequent flashes of truly basic insight which flow from the author's long experience and deep concern.

—Shirley E. Greene

Not One of the "Twelve Greatest Churches"?

Ministers who are doing their level best to "carry on" God's work at their appointed posts should not be too despondent if those posts were not included in the recent poll of "The Twelve Greatest Churches," made by *The Christian Century,* writes Mrs. John D. Long in a spring issue of the *Gospel Messenger,* Elgin, Illinois.

"If yours is not one of America's 'Twelve Greatest' Churches," you need not succumb to the nationwide epidemic of "self-abasement," the writer says. All churches cannot be "great;" neither can all ministers or all lay people be what the world calls "great;" but the man who does his best "has the thrill of joining the rejoicing millions of obscure, ordinary people who have accepted the ease of mind and rest of spirit which Jesus offers when he says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden . . .' "

Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, Lord of field and forest, hill and stream, we thank Thee for the manifestation of Thy power in all growing things. Fruitful soil, quickening sunlight, favorable rains are Thy good gifts to us. As Thou hast made us to have dominion over all the work of Thy hands, help us, by Thy spirit, to enter into our heritage, esteeming it a high calling to be Thy husbandmen. Help us to be mindful of Thy partnership in all the cultivation of our gardens and the care of our flocks and herds. And when the ground hath brought forth plentifully and earth hath yielded her increase may we know that Thou hast given us our daily bread, and give Thee thanks. In Jesus' name. *Amen.*

—Hilda L. Ives